



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



নিসর্গ নেটওয়ার্ক

Sundarbans Wildlife Sanctuary

The Sundarbans Wildlife Sanctuary (SWS), the world's largest mangrove forests, is in the south western part of Bangladesh and covers 3 districts (Satkhira, Khulna and Bagerhat). This area comprises of 4 Protected Areas (PA), including 3 Wildlife Sanctuaries in the Sundarbans and 1 ECA adjoining the Sundarbans. The total area of Sundarbans Reserved Forest (SRF) is 600,017 ha which includes the PAs area of 199,299 ha. The landscape area is about 160km in length and 10km wide. Nishorgo Network and IPAC project activities are carried out throughout this area. The SWS cluster site comprises of 3 distinct regions:

- Sundarbans East Wildlife Sanctuary (SEWS) as PA was declared in 1996 under the Bangladesh Wildlife (Preservation) Order, 1973 (amended in 1974)
- Sundarbans West Wildlife Sanctuary (SWWS) as PA was declared in 1996 under the Bangladesh Wildlife (Preservation) Order, 1973 (amended in 1974).
- Sundarbans South Wildlife Sanctuary (SSWS) as PA was declared in 1996 under the Bangladesh Wildlife (Preservation) Order, 1973 (amended in 1974).

The SWS has lately gained high priority in the eyes of the Govt. and Donor communities mainly due to its diverse biodiversity and as it is a significant source for carbon financing.

Surrounding Communities :

There are about 104,429 households in the coastal surroundings of the SWS. The villages have had a long association with the forest and its reserves. As co-habitants of the harsh mangrove environment, the people adapted to the salty waters by engaging in fishing and other aquaculture activities. Honey and wax collection is another SRF resource these communities are heavily dependent on and the Mouali (honey/wax collector) risk their lives to venture in to the forest during the honey/wax collecting season.

Biodiversity :

There are about 375 faunal species which include around 35 reptiles, 315 birds, 42 mammals and 291 (210 whitefish, 24 shrimps, 14 crabs and 43 mollusks) fish species. The flagship species, the Bengal Tiger, *Panthera tigris*, resides in the Sundarbans - one of the highest tiger dense forests in the world. The forest is rich in mangrove species like the Sundri *Heritiera fomes*, Gewa *Excoecaria agallocha*, Keora *Sonneratia apetala*, Hental *Pheonix paludosa* and Goran *Ceriops decandra*. Resident mangrove species of birds include the Streak-breasted Woodpecker *Picus viridanus*, White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, the endangered species of Masked Finfoot *Heliopais personatu* and vulnerable species of Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus*; other mammals include the Rhesus Macaque *Macaca mulatta*, Spotted Deer *Axis axis* and Irrawaddy Dolphin *Orcaella brevirostris*. Amongst amphibian and reptile species the Estuarine Crocodile *Crocodylus porosus*, the endangered Olive Ridley Sea Turtle *Lepidochelys olivacea* and the White-Lipped Pit Viper *Trimeresurus albolabris* are notable. A wide variety of shrimp like the *Penaeus monodon*, *Penaeus indicus* and *Macrobrachium rosenbergii* are found along with other fish species like the Sea Bass *Lates calcarifer*.

Sanctuary Threats :

The Sundarbans Wildlife Sanctuary is located adjacent to the Bay of Bengal and thus performs as a natural fence for the coastal areas and Bangladesh from high tides, storms and cyclones. However, these storms etc. do pose a threat and add high biotic pressure on the forests as high salinity hampers the land productivity including agriculture and a lack of fresh water. Pirates are also a big concern for the Sundarbans dwellers, especially for the poor resource collectors. Illegal felling of trees, tiger & deer poaching, post larvae of prawn & shrimp collection, and destructive over fishing are further threats. Most of the landscape area has been transformed to shrimp farms which are controlled by local influential people. As a result, traditional practices of agriculture activities have reduced and the scope of land-based activities for poor people is limited. Most of the people remain unemployed and dependent on the natural resources of the Sundarbans for livelihood. As the salinity increases, the natural balance of the forest is upset resulting in shrinking in the forest and the mangrove species of Sundari trees. However, as the people pose a threat on the sustainable conservation of the forest, the elusive tiger residing within also causes ample damage to the lives of the communities.

Nishorgo Network :

SWS is a valued member of the Nishorgo Network, Bangladesh's growing group of forest and wetland PAs being conserved through co-management. Co-management brings together community, government and other stakeholders to work together to conserve Bangladesh's rich natural heritage and eco-system services in a manner that contributes to long-term sustainable development, increased food security, and integrated climate change adaptation and mitigation.



Sundarbans Wildlife Sanctuary



Bengal Tiger



Deer in the Sundarbans





USAID

আমেরিকার জনগণের পক্ষ থেকে



নিসর্গ নেটওয়ার্ক

Nishorgo Network co-management shares roles and responsibilities between communities and government, demonstrating economic benefits of PA conservation to local communities through eco-tourism and sustainable alternative income generation activities, as well as by actively involving them in conservation management of PAs through participation in co-management organizations and joint patrol initiatives. The Nishorgo Network actively engages women, youth and ethnic minorities in co-management, and provides a foundation of good governance.

Co-Management & Sundarbans Wildlife Sanctuary:

Sundarbans Wildlife Sanctuary is a leader of co-management for effective conservation, with support from USAID's Integrated Protected Area Co-Management (IPAC) project implemented in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh's Ministry of Environment and Forests and Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock. Co-management highlights in Sundarbans Wildlife Sanctuary include the following:

- Formation and re-election of a co-management platform including Co-Management Committee and Council; Village Conservation Forums (VCFs) and Peoples' Forum (PF).
- Development of eco-tourism support for Sundarbans, including training a cadre of eco-guides from local communities as well as the establishment of eco-cottages near the Sanctuary.
- Initiating the process of Entrance Fee Revenue collection and sharing mechanism in place, ensuring 50% of tourism fees accrue to the CMC.
- Alternative Livelihoods Development training and support for Sundarbans-dependent communities, including sustainable value chain support and MoUs between local communities and national buyers in both fisheries and handicrafts.
- Training and capacity building as well as leveraging additional financial support to sustain effective co-management of Sundarbans conservation into the future

USAID's Integrated Protected Area Co-management (IPAC) Project in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MOEF) and Ministry of Fisheries & Livestock (MOFL) has taken significant steps to conserve Sundarbans Wildlife Sanctuary including:

- Training forest dependent communities on different AIGAs including hand crafted items, horticulture, aquaculture and nursery plantation.
- Raising adequate awareness regarding Eco-cottages and training eco guides (currently 20 guides are available) to accompany visitors on the trails, in a bid to promote Eco-tourism.
- Initiating the introduction of Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS) for reduced indoor pollution via a partner organization.
- Development of 3 CMC and 3 Peoples Forum to overlook the Sanctuary's management.
- Arrangement of 209 VCFs to increase consciousness and promote conservation focused actions.
- 340 Nishorgo Sahayak (facilitators) have been trained to execute conventions and administering co-management activities.
- 9 conservation Clubs have been formed to engage youth in conservation of Sundarbans, which include Forest Conservation Clubs involving not only students, but youth and other members of the community to raise awareness regarding conservation issues.
- Coordinating a process of Entry Fee Collection at the gates of Sundarbans entry points to ensure sharing of benefits between the government and local communities.
- Collaborating with the World Bank on various initiatives including the Sundarbans fisheries project and regional tiger conservation. IPAC is also working with the World Bank-managed BioCarbon Fund in Washington, DC, for support of a forest carbon finance initiative in the Sundarbans.



Canal in the Sundarbans



Sundarbans Mangrove Forest



AIG activities

Contact Information :

Mr. Abul Kalam Fakir
President, Chandpai (CMC)
Chandpai, Mongla, Bagerhat
Cell-01711342216

Mr. Mojammel Hossain Haoladar
President, Saronkhola (CMC)
Saronkhola, Raenda, Bagerhat
Cell-01718060760

Mr. Asim Kumar Joardar
President, Munshigonj (CMC)
Munshigonj, Shaymnagar, Satkhira
Cell-01712146325

Integrated Protected Area Co-Management (IPAC) Project

House# 68, Road # 1, Block-I
Banani, Dhaka- 1213, Bangladesh
Tel: 880-2-987 3229, 880-2-987 1553
Fax: 880-2-989 6164
www.nishorgo.org



Department of Environment

